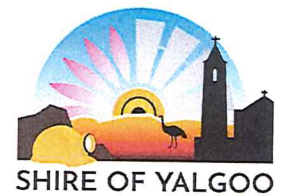


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Our reference:

Your reference:

28 April 2023

Electoral Commissioner
Western Australian Electoral Distribution Commission
Level 2, 111 St Georges Terrace
Perth WA 6000

Dear Mr Kennedy

Please consider the following suggestions endorsed by Council at their Ordinary Meeting on Friday the 28th April 2023.

The Shire of Yalgoo is highly supportive of the seat of North West Central being retained. We believe the Large District Allowance (LDA) should be reviewed and increased due to the areas vast geographic size and remoteness.

While enrollment figures have decreased there is still substantial economic activity outside the Wheatbelt and Southwest of Western Australia. As further government services and representation are pulled from the regions less people will want to live and enroll here. This significant disparity is seen in the mining sector where thousands of people are accommodated in our local government area and surrounds for over two thirds of the year but when it comes time to vote they do so in Perth where their thoughts relate to the school their children attend and cost of living pressures and not the social or environmental concerns of where they spend the majority of their year.

There is also the potential for a large number of eligible but unregistered voters in the existing seat. Aboriginal engagement and statistics have varied greatly when comparing subsequent census data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics with the usage of grass roots services or anecdotal evidence. If multiple state and federal agencies cannot provide fundamental basic services such as safe drinking water and consistent education to remote communities, these communities should not be further disenfranchised by making political representation even more difficult to engage with.



The State Governments own incentives and changes to the Land Administration Act should also be considered. Investment in green energy and hydrogen projects may result in population increases as a result of new industry and the use of pastoral land for entirely new purposes. This is in addition to projected tourism and mining growth.

Travel is already a major constraint for access to services and advocacy. 1000km is an impractical distance and makes visiting your local representative impossible for most constituents. We are lucky that recent representatives have been willing to travel as much as they have. We have however been caught out and missed meetings with politicians at all state and federal levels due to their attendance at events or disasters from Broome to Carnarvon. Representatives of Perth seats will likely never have to determine which disadvantaged community to visit when one has been hit by a bushfire and the other a flood at the same time.

For some areas of the seat the regional center has become Geraldton, however for more inland towns it is easier and faster to attend Meekatharra or even Perth dependent on the type of resource or service required. With this current spread of services and population it is already extremely difficult to centralize offices near the majority of the population base.

Telecommunications are not an adequate rebuttal to communicating with elected individuals. While new technologies and operators are driving down prices, current regional costs are prohibitive and not reliable. Months of outages to power and telecommunications have been demonstrated since the last election as a result of natural disasters. These are often important times in peoples lives when they look to provide feedback to government. Similar outages effecting the ability of an individual to contact their representative in a Perth seat have probably not occurred in the information age. Much like access to everything else the distance makes it near impossible for an individual to participate in democracy if they are technologically illiterate, speak a language other than English or don't own a car or satellite connection.

Should the Commission, after considering these factors of remoteness, find that the population of the seat is still below the average amount required by legislation we suggest that adjoining like boundaries are considered for change rather than have one or two representatives for the Northern half of Western Australia.

With the WAEC pulling polling booths from Yalgoo for both state and federal elections we are disheartened and feel like our vote doesn't matter.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Holland
Chief Executive Officer
Shire of Yalgoo